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NATIONAL CHARTER BY WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE

I. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- **“Women’s Sabha”** before every Gram Sabha need to be evolved statutorily as a national policy; which will support the process of women in governance.
- Ensure that every state Government opens a **toll free helpline** for elected women at the state and district levels to attend to emergent needs (adverse or otherwise) in terms of police assistance, information dissemination, legal assistance, counseling, etc with a view to strengthen women's participation in governance
- Provide for EWR’s protection law to deal with those committing **violence** against women candidates during and after elections
- Scrap the **two child norm** as applicable at present in respect of the representatives of Panchayat’s, which is against the reproductively rights and it will encourage girl-killing.
- Provide **right to land** and housing in joint names of spouses and even for single, deserted, Dalit, tribal, Devadasi, widowed and battered women and for those rendered homeless in caste/communal riots and due to displacement
- The **motion of no confidence** cannot be moved against him/her without 3/4th majority.
- **Flag hosting** by all elected women heads at all levels need to be a national policy; which will strengthen the “sense of freedom” for the women also.
- Sarpanch, woman or man, especially belonging to the deprived caste/class (from BPL category) must get **travel concession** for their mobility and as incentive for performance
- Finance conditions need to be very **effective, transparent& accountable** to PRI’s.
- A **cell** at the district level, preferably in the Collector's office must be set up, where the women and Dalit Sarpanchs can approach if they face any functional difficulty.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATIONS

- Ensure that due consideration is given by authorities at all levels to the proposals of the gram Sabha, particularly those relating to **issues of women** and children
- Ensure adequate number of **women Panchayat secretaries** and entrust not more than two gram Panchayat’s to one Panchayat secretary/village development officer
- Ensure that preference is given by Gram Panchayat’s to women's self help groups in awarding **contracts** for village level construction work
- Implement the Women Component of the **Five Year Plan** through Panchayat’s
- Ensure that the Government provides **33% funds** for women's empowerment at the national, state and at local self governance, along with concrete guidelines.
- Elected women representatives must be provided with an adequate **EWR fund** to enable them to perform efficiently.

- **Women's participation** in decision making need to be facilitated statutorily, at the level of
 - (a) Gram Sabha
 - (b) Village sub-committees
 - (c) Financial Decentralization and control over natural resources
- PRI administrative procedures & governance need to be in local languages.

III. SUPPORTIVE CONSIDERATIONS

- Introduce regular **gender sensitive** reorientation programs for MPs, MLAs and bureaucrats about the funds, functions and functionaries of the Panchayat's
- Provide **literacy training** under special crash programs for illiterate women Panchayat members
- Facilitate **exchange programs** for Panchayat women representatives inside and outside the country
- Give **awards** for outstanding performance by women representatives at all levels of the Panchayat's in the country
- **Political Education and Training** must be imparted to the women representatives of the backward castes/classes and other marginalized sections of the rural society and elected representatives of the Gram Panchayat's and other motivated and potential leaders from the Gram Sabha on their rights and roles in the account both the knowledge and significance of the political processes as well as the political dynamics. This must be mandatory in a sustained and focused manner.
- Every policy needs clear-cut **implementation** guidelines, mass awareness strategies, punishment mechanisms and review procedures to minimize wide policy practice gaps within the context of India.

IV. POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- **33%** reservation for women in all national and state policy making bodies on the basis of policy for local self governance.
- Provide reservation for women for the **post of pradhan** / up-Sarpanch of the gram Panchayat's in all the states.
- The minimum representation requirement for the women in the Panchayat's should be **50%**. It was one of the important recommendations of the 81st Constitutional Amendment Act passed by the 14th Lok Sabha
- **Constituencies** reserved for women must be determined not by a draw of lots but by a definite sequence in rotation. This will reduce uncertainty and also the arbitrary element and give some breathing space to the parties and the aspirants
- Reservation of **1/3** seats in various **committees** of Municipal Corporations, State Legislatures and Parliament must be provided. This will expose women to all the intricacies of legislative affairs
- A Standing **Committee for Women's Development** needs to be constituted in the parliament as well as in the State Legislatures wherein 1/3 seats must be reserved for

men. This is very essential in order to establish that women's issues are not the concern of women alone

- Reservations need not be eternal phenomena. The policy must be **reviewed** after 15 years. After 15 years it can be assessed whether any natural processes have evolved during this period, leading to a greater representation of women in those constituencies which were always open like Rajya Sabha and Legislative Councils, as well as in such constituencies which have got de-reserved due to rotation
- Support Women's Charter of Demands – 1996 specifies the following :
 - (a) an end to **criminalization** of politics and politicization of crime
 - (b) public declaration of **assets** of candidates
 - (c) right to **recall** elected members
 - (d) right to **information**
 - (e) **public hearings** on projects and policies that affect people to involve them in planning
 - (f) the nexus between the **liquor lobby** and politics should be cut